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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ, MARCH 17, 2004

1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Heraldito" on 3/17 entitled "They should come back." "The bloody terrorist attacks in Madrid last week, the defeat of Jose Maria Aznar's Partido Popular in Spain, and the announcement by recently elected Spanish Prime Minister Rodriguez Zapatero that their troops will leave Iraq by June 30 if the U.N. doesn't approve a resolution on the Iraqi occupation, confirm that everyone who opposed the first illegal and immoral 'preventive war', including EL HERALDO, were absolutely right, as well as all those who opposed the sending of Honduran troops to the Iraqi occupation."

"In many ways, the Honduran people have expressed their disagreement with the decision to get involved in the Iraqi conflict. The disclosure of all those lies used by the Bush administration to justify the invasion and occupation has done nothing but confirm the fact that there were no valid reasons to destroy the cradle of human civilization and cause so much pain and suffering to the Iraqi people."

"The war in Iraq wasn't even about fighting terrorism, because, so far, no one has been able to prove any ties between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden."

"On the other hand, Honduran troops shouldn't be expected to ensure public safety and help rebuild another country, as long as there's so much insecurity and so much to do here in our own country."

"The Maduro administration made a terrible mistake by sending Honduran troops to Iraq, and that needs to be fixed, before we seriously have something to regret by getting involved in a cause that's not fair, moral, legal, and, especially, not ours."

Palmer